

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief Lowell M. Porter**

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## **Two-and-a-Half Year WSP Backlog Project Successfully Completed**

After an aggressive two and a half years of hard work and more than 1.8 million documents, the Criminal Records Division of the Washington State Patrol has completely defeated the backlog of fingerprint cards and disposition reports, it was announced today by Chief Lowell M. Porter. The total number of documents processed during this effort included not only the backlogged documents, but those coming in on a daily basis.

This project—which began on July 1, 2001, with 24 temporary employees, the permanent staff, and with funding help from the Washington State legislature and a federal grant—came to a close on December 31, 2003. This project was seen as a top priority by the WSP for the safety of the citizens of Washington, as all of the criminal history records maintained at the WSP repository are used by the entire state's criminal justice community for investigations, officer safety, firearm licensing/purchasing decisions, and criminal sentencing.

In addition, this information is used by hundreds of public and private entities such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and volunteer organizations to make employment and licensing decisions. "By eliminating this backlog," Chief Porter commented, "citizens are now receiving very timely and the most up-to-date and accurate criminal history record information."

Major factors that had contributed to the backlog included major increases in fingerprint cards and court dispositions received and numerous technology projects which diverted staff from document processing. Implementation of several of these technology projects recently, including electronic fingerprint submissions from local law enforcement agencies throughout the state, has increased efficiency and is helping staff keep up with current workloads.

The WSP Criminal Records Division receives requests for anywhere between 70,000-80,000 background checks per month, according to Mary Neff, division commander.

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